

# Questioning Techniques

This is a list to help remind you about all of the different ideas we talked about during the Questioning Module.

1. Wait Time: Give students time to think after you pose a question to the group. Research has shown that even giving students 3 to 5 seconds to process a question increases quality and quantity of responses dramatically.
2. "No Hands Up": Unless they are specifically asked to, students are told NOT to raise their hands when a question is asked. All students should be ready to answer a question, even if the response is, "I don't know."
3. Spiral Questioning: Lessons and questions need to be carefully structured to lead students through a step-by-step process of discovery. Students should first explore using basic cognitive skills- observation, description, identification, recall-and then spiral to eventually higher levels of cognition such as synthesis, application, and interpretation through class discussions.
4. ABCDE Cards: The teacher asks or presents a multiple-choice question, and then asks students to simultaneously ("on the count of three") hold up one or more cards, labeled A, B, C, D, or E, as their individual response. ABCDE cards can be cheaply made on 4-inch x 6-inch white cardstock printed with one black, bold-print letter per card. A full set might include the letters A through H plus T. This format allows all students to select not only one correct answer, but multiple correct answers, or to answer true/false questions. This is an example of an "all-class response system" that helps the teacher to quickly get a sense of what students know or understand while engaging all students in the class. The teacher may choose to ask the question orally or to present it to the class on an overhead. The teacher then uses the information in the student responses to adapt and organize the ensuing discussion or lesson.
5. Socratic Seminar: Ask students to write down questions that they have about concepts at the end of a lesson or unit. Organize the students into small groups and designate one person to be the facilitator to guide the group discussion. Students can put forth one of their questions to the group for discussion and then the next student can ask their question. The teacher can assist any group that needs support, and/or use this as an opportunity for observation of student learning.
6. Inquiry Questioning:  
Why do you think that?  
How do you know?  
Could you give me an example?  
What do you mean when you say . . . ?  
What data/examples do you have to support your position?  
Tell me more about . . . ?  
How might you validate or confirm . . . ?
7. "Add on" Responses: Ask students to "add on" to what another student has said. Often student's thinking is triggered by another person's response to a question. It's a good time to ask a more reluctant participant to give his or her input.
8. White Board Responses: In order to get a quick snap shot of understanding, give each student a small white board to record a short (one- or two- word) response to a question. Students can hold them up and teachers can look around the room to see how things are progressing.

9. Tongue Depressor Questioning: Write each student's name on a tongue depressor. Place them in a cup and pull one out when you want to ask a question to the group. The student whose name is picked can answer the question. If he or she doesn't know the answer, they can pick the next stick.
10. Using DOK to Design Questions that Elicit Understanding: Always consider the level of the questions you are asking. If you ask recall- type questions, expect discussions that are less deep in understanding of concepts.

The focus of these techniques is to gain as much information as possible about what your students know and don't know. Having this information about your students can guide your instruction as immediately as is practical!